

# **Longitudinal Examination of Attrition and Retention in the Army**

Briefing For:  
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Dr. D. Bruce Bell  
Senior Research Psychologist  
U.S. Army Research Institute  
(703) 617-8867/DSN 767-8867  
bellb@ari.army.mil



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U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences, 5001 Eisenhower Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22333-5600



# Why 1<sup>st</sup> Term Attrition Is So Important and Intransigent

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## Scope of the Problem:

- About 1 in 3 first term soldiers will not complete their 1<sup>st</sup> enlistment.
- GAO estimates that replacing those who are lost costs \$38K/soldier.
- The Army Chief of Staff has set annual attrition goals that have not yet been met:
  - FY00-02 goals: 12% of IET soldiers and 5% of those who are serving in units (note: actual FY97-02 attrition: 14.2%-18.6% in IET & 6.1%-7.4% post-IET)

## What Army management has tried in the last 10 years:

- Started and institutionalized 6 trainee rehabilitation programs in IET.
- Had the CSA set numerical goals for attrition reduction (see above).
- Established working groups to oversee progress:
  - U. S. Army Accessions Command General Officer Working Group;
  - USA 1st Term Attrition Council of Colonels;
  - USA 1st Term Attrition General Officer Steering Committee.
- Funded R&D: ARI, RAND, TRAC(TRADOC), CHIPPM.



# Why 1<sup>st</sup> Term Attrition Is So Important and Intransigent (continued)

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## What previous R&D has discovered:

- Soldier characteristics at entry predict attrition.
- Reducing attrition via entry screening is difficult.
- Training attrition can be reduced via:
  - Realistic job previews,
  - Changing physical training parameters, and
  - Leadership (Drills who see their job as “quality control” have higher rates in their unit than do their peers).
- Because most trainees can be discharged for more than one reason, both leaders and trainees can and do “shop” for the most efficient way out.
- Attrition codes do not always reflect the “true” reason a given soldier was discharged.
- Although “quitting” is often an accurate description of what occurs, it is never listed as the reason for discharge.
- Causes of IET and Post-IET attrition are quite different.



# ARI's Study of the FY99 Enlisted Entry Cohort: "Project First Term"

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***A comprehensive study to model the first term of enlistment from entry to attrition, term completion, and/or reenlistment.***

- **Survey soldiers in the Fiscal Year 1999 accession cohort at different periods throughout their enlistment.**
  - Entry in Reception Battalions
  - End of Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training
  - While in units during 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of service
  - On leaving Army (attriting soldiers)
- **Extract soldier data from administrative files at various times during the first term.**
- **Survey cross-sectional comparison samples of soldiers with one, two, three, or four years of service to confirm findings and to forecast trends.**



# At Risk of Attrition\*

Factor	3 Month	12 Month	Unit* *
Female	+ +	+ +	+ +
Lower AFQT	+ +	+	+
Not a HS Grad	+	+	+ +
1 or more UCMJ offense	N/A	N/A	+
Medical problem/injury in Training	N/A	N/A	+
Confident at Reception	-	-	-
* + = very high; + = high; - = low; N/A = Not Applicable			
** Unit = attrition up to 36 months after completing IET			+
Not Married			



# Implications & Next Steps

- **Implications:**

- Differences between high and low risk groups persevere beyond the training base.
- Results show need to give special attention to retaining members of high risk groups.
- Results also show need to address certain in-service influences, such as injuries in training, to alleviate attrition in operational units.

- **Next Steps:**

- The FY02 (3<sup>rd</sup> year of service) data have been analyzed.
- Report on attrition within operational units received in Mar 2003.
- Cohort is now completing 4 years of service.
- Preliminary attrition/retention models to be completed summer 2003.



# Back Up Slides

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# Top 5 FY02 Attrition Categories

## Initial Entry Training

(0-6 Months of Service)

- Existed Prior to Service: 3945
- ELS: Failure to Adapt: 3208
- Other Medical Discharges: 939
- ELS: Lack of Motivation: 800
- ELS: Good of the Service: 764

Source: ATRRS ME September 2002 Data

## Unit Attrition

(7-36 Months of Service)

- Misconduct: 3238
- Pregnancy: 966
- Physical Disability: 857
- ILO CM/Good of the Service: 670
- Physical (Not Disability): 543

Source: SIDPERS as of ME September 2002 Data





# Milestones for Data Collection and ARI Presentations

Date(s)	Activity	Sample Size & Status
10/98 - 9/99	Acquire DMDC, EMF, & ATRRS records for all FY99 soldiers.	N = 63,000 Complete
8/99	Collect Drill Instructor records of BCT trainees in 3 <sup>rd</sup> week @ Ft. Benning & Ft. Jackson.	N = 2,200 Complete
1/99 - 12/99	Examine separation folders for trainees exiting IET.	N = 6,000 Complete
1/99 - 8/99	Survey trainees @ Reception Station.	N = 29,000 Complete
4/99 - 12/99	Survey of trainees @ end of IET.	N = 39,000* Complete
4/99 - 12/99	Survey of IET trainees who are exiting the Army.	N = 4,400 Complete
10/00 - 12/00	Compare with other cohorts via the SSMP.	N = 900 Complete
Spring, 2001	Survey soldiers in 1 <sup>st</sup> year with their unit.	N = 16,000 Complete
2/02 - 9/02	Survey soldiers in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year with their unit.	N= TBD On-going
2/03 - 9/03	Survey soldiers in 3 <sup>rd</sup> year with their unit.	Cancelled 2/03. Resources being reprogrammed

\* 22,000 at the end of BCT, 10,000 at the end of AIT & 7,000 at the end of OSUT. Note: some trainees may have exited before the end of the study.



# Recent Army Research Institute Products on 1<sup>st</sup> Tour Enlisted Attrition & Retention

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## Literature Reviews:

Laurence, J. H., Naughton, J. A. & Harris, D. A. (1996). Attrition revisited: Identifying the problem and its solutions (Research Note). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Van Iddekinge, C. H. & Strickland, W. J. (2003). Workforce attrition and retention in the military: an update (Unpublished manuscript). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

## Attrition:

Sipes, D. E., Strickland, W. J., Laurence, J. H, DiFazio, A. S., & Wetzel, E. S. (2000). Training base attrition: Analysis and findings (Unpublished manuscript). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Van Iddekinge, C H. , Strickland, W. J., & Sipes, D. E. (2003). Attrition among the Army's FY1999 entry Cohort after 3 years of Service (Unpublished manuscript). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.



# Recent Army Research Institute Products on 1<sup>st</sup> Tour Enlisted Attrition & Retention (continued)

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## **Attrition & retention:**

Sipes, D. E. & Strickland, W. J. (2002). Factors influencing the continuance intentions of initial entry training graduates (Unpublished manuscript). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

Sipes, D. E., Strickland, W. J. & Sun, S. (2002). Attrition and career intentions among the Army's FY99 entry cohort (Unpublished manuscript). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.

## **Retention:**

Van Iddekinge, C. H., Strickland, W. J. & Sipes, D. E. (2003). Career intentions among the Army's FY99 entry cohort after 3 years of service (Unpublished manuscript). Alexandria, VA: U. S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences.